

# Local Family Council COVID-19 Informational Call Notes

## Call Details

**Facility:** WSP / Teleconference

**Date and Time:** 1/5/2021, 1:00PM

## Attendees

- Associate Supt. Steve Barker, CUS Paul Daniel, Sgt. Rocky Beal, AA3 Carrie Meyer, SFC Rep Wendy Dubinsky, Hattie Wolf, Dean Dubinsky, OCO Caitlyn Roberts, Anna Ivanov, Steve Kugler, Loretta Pedersen, Connie Hollis, Carolyn Melhius, Adria McGee, David Detlof

## Weekly Update

Please provide the most up-to-date stats:

# of men in quarantine? **358**

In Isolation: **221**

Positives here now: **214 (w/4) of those at AHCC Regional Care Facility.**

# Total of men tested positive since the beginning? **851 total cases**

# of Positives during the outbreak? **693**

# of staff screened out at this time? **50**

# of staff tested positive? **97 total**

Testing approximately 930 a week, total of **17247 to date.**

## Quarantine

Delta

Echo West

Golf East

IMU-N A, B, & D Mods

Unit-10 A&B Tiers

William U

## Isolation

Echo East

Fox East

Golf-West

Unit-8 A-Tier

IMU-N C-Mod

SC Gym

## Submitted Questions

1. Some guys are receiving a letter from the IRS saying they need to call in to verify their identity to receive their stimulus checks, but guys on quarantine and isolation are having an especially difficult time getting communications to counselors. How will WSP facilitate guys being able to schedule phone calls with the IRS on isolation and quarantine units?
  - **This is the first that we have heard about this. Guys really need to work with their Counselors and CUS's to schedule a time to make the call.**
2. When will outgoing chains start running again, especially for guys finalized for camp?

- We don't know when the outgoing chains will resume. That is up to Prison Health Services Unified Command (PHSUC). If requirements are met, chains will resume as of tomorrow.
3. What is WSP's budget for IIBF-funded "comfort items" for guys on quarantine/isolation, and what items is WSP considering purchasing? And might families be included in that decision, since we are probably more in touch with what our loved ones need and feel right now than DOC staff are?
- We don't know the budget. We were just given the go-ahead yesterday to begin making those purchases. Mr. Holbrook is working on this with the Business Office. Please understand that this is not a small task. Whatever is decided upon to be sent out, will be sent to every single member of the population. They will all receive the same or very similar items.
4. Why is it that the mailroom is falling farther and farther behind on mail and book deliveries when we are being told there are 700 fewer prisoners at WSP than would normally be the case? Shouldn't that be reducing mail burdens? (Or has WSP increased mail burdens by cutting off so much phone access for quarantined prisoners, leaving mail and JPay as the only avenue of communication for prisoners and their families?)
- Books are behind due to the high volume of books we have been receiving. The mandatory layoffs began a back log of books. They did not stop coming in when staff were laid off and there was no one here to process them. We have seen a larger than normal volume of first class mail and flat mail possibly due to COVID-19. This mail had to be caught up 3 separate times. There were two layoffs and an extended holiday weekend. The Mail Processing Driver (MPD) who processes books has been absent from work quite a bit over the last three months and the other MPD's are attempting to help work on the back log of books but they have their own duties that they must keep up with. Also, we are still short staffed in the Mail Room as there are still an open positions. Human Resources (HR) is working on the situation with recruitments but they themselves were mapped out recently and are behind but are working on filling it.
  - On another note, we checked the stats and we have processed 204217 outgoing JPay messages in the last month and 179903 incoming messages in the last month. Our staff are currently working on 1731 outgoing and 1585 incoming messages.
    - **Update:** the Mailroom will be working overtime to get caught up on books.
5. What are the precise shower/phone access schedules being followed now in all quarantine/isolation areas at WSP? And for units that have been taken off quarantine lockdown, how close to normal have their operations become?
- This depends on unit. Each unit runs a little bit different based upon the custody level and the current COVID status of the unit. Quarantine units do not run the same as Isolation Units and the protocol from unit to unit may be different based on the physical plant of the unit. As close to normal as staffing and current programming options allow.
6. Is WSP following [CDC recommendations for correctional settings](#) on NOT reducing prisoner access to showers in all quarantine/isolation units? If not, how is DOC HQ justifying defiance of CDC guidelines?

- This answer came from PHSUC from a HS standpoint, the first week of COVID is usually when people are most infectious and therefore we have opted to minimize movement during this period of time as much as possible. Based on our experience, this virus can spread within living units even when appropriate precautions are taken. The decision around limiting showers in the first week of infection was made to best protect the population, the porters, and staff in that unit. After the first week, showers are permitted per unit operating procedure. However, if a unit is only housing people that are on isolation (i.e. everyone in the unit is positive for COVID), showers have been permitted per normal unit procedure from the time of diagnosis while instructing staff to maintain at least 6 feet of distance. We will likely incorporate this change into the next version of the protocol.
7. Quite a few guys at WSP report having commissary orders cancelled but not getting money refunded to their accounts. Is CI trying to rectify this?
- Per General Manager Marcum, he stated that the process is that refunds are automatic for items that are sent back. If someone does not receive a refund then they should send a kite or letter to Correctional Industries Commissary and it will be refunded. The problem was identified last week when the normal commissary personnel were mapped out.
8. Guys on quarantined units say that getting access to video visits (especially since they are now being allowed to use JPay kiosks for other things) would be a token of consolation from DOC at this time when some are now almost reaching month two of miserable, inhumane quarantine. Can WSP align itself with what other facilities in the state are doing in this regard?
- We discussed this topic last week. We cannot guarantee that someone who has a scheduled video visit will be able to get out during the scheduled time. We are trying to accommodate them as much as possible (they are still going on) but cannot guarantee that they will happen. We had a situation just the other day where a guy had a video visit scheduled in an isolation unit and there was medical staff in the unit doing medical checks at that time. We cannot postpone the medical checks because they are absolutely necessary and we have very limited medical staff to do them. So when they show up, they have priority.
9. When will SPL operations resume? Living unit photo "programs"?
- 01/06/20 for SPL. We don't have a date yet for the other programming but are working on resuming different programming in different units.
10. Why are Sunday lockdowns still happening in Victor Unit? Can't at least some shower and phone access be provided on this day of the week?
- There should not be any "Sunday Lockdowns" going on anywhere. As a matter of fact, Victor Unit came off of quarantine/isolation status a couple of days ago and should be running as close to normal as possible.

11. Why can't post-pos guys returning to William Unit be housed on A side with their original cellies when B side also contains prisoners who have continued to test negative? None of this makes logical or scientific sense, and people are extremely unhappy with being at almost TWO months of miserable, inhumane quarantine restrictions AND having their celly assignments disrupted.
  - We are currently in the process of transitioning the Bravo side of Williams Unit to Post Positive so we can open it up close to normal, like Victor Unit. We discussed this last week when I informed you all that we have a staff member dedicated to tracking all of the movement so that we can eventually move guys back to their previous housing with their previous cell mate as appropriate.
  
12. Why are guys whose tests turned out to be negative being kept in Fox Isolation still? And doesn't this housing assignment expose them to COVID?
  - These are clinical decisions. Guys who are in isolation are either symptomatic or they are positive. We are moving individuals out of areas as soon as they are cleared by medical and in accordance with medical guidelines.
  
13. If there are so few infractions and hole assignments right now, why can't the lengthy wait for hearings be sped up, especially in cases where mitigating circumstances ought to result in infractions being overturned? Can guys please be put back in their original living units so they don't have to endure the torture of solitary confinement any longer than they have to? (After all, DOC does claim to be working with the Vera Institute to reduce habitual reliance on IMU as an easy solution for things that ought to be dealt with in a better way that doesn't destroy the human mind and well-being.)
  - There is not a lengthy wait for Hearings that we are aware of. There is a lot that goes into the Disciplinary Hearing process that involves the evidentiary process and a person's Due Process rights. The Hearings Dept. is following DOC Policy 460.000 Disciplinary Process for Prisons. The Hearings Officers take all information into account when making their decisions and cannot review the evidence before the actual hearing. This would violate due process rights. Also, there is a review process for every single person who is sent to the IMUs. There are certain conditions that must be met before someone can be placed in IMU. Then the placement is reviewed all the way up to the Associate Supt. Level as to ensure appropriateness.
  - CUS Danielle adds: When the IMU committee meets, Every IMU incarcerate is interviewed. Unfortunately, when they end up in IMU due to an infraction it makes it hard to transfer with that new infraction on your record, or points lost.
  
14. Some guys feel they have been sent to the hole in retaliation for pointing out to staff that things staff was (is?) requiring prisoners to do outside of their quarantine cells is having the effect of undermining quarantine effectiveness. (Hence the mysterious burst of positive cases on units that were in quarantine lockdown for over a month.) If this is indeed true, is staff being corrected on the fact that it is inappropriate to send prisoners to the hole for pointing out or questioning legitimately problematic public health practices? (Some guys feel that staff got scared and panicked when they realized that the concern prisoners pointed out could in fact perhaps bring about a lawsuit, especially given that in Oregon courts have ruled that correctional officials are not immune from lawsuits over mishandling of

the pandemic, and so perhaps staff felt they would deal with the prisoners by conveniently sending them to the hole?)

- I cannot speak about how someone feels or does not feel or speak about what they believe may have taken place in a particular situation. We spoke about this last week a little and this is related to the last question. The review process for Administrative Segregation includes corrections with staff if someone is sent to IMU inappropriately.

15. Why are curio packages being mailed out on an extreme delay, and why is the mailroom rejecting handmade cards guys with curio permits are sending out that were made with curio supplies? (Mailroom is stating that cards using "stationery paper" cannot be mailed out?! How exactly does this represent a legitimate Penological objective protecting safety and security for the State of Washington?!)

- Sgt. Dugger reports that he has not seen any curio rejections for cards made of stationary paper or just cards that were made with materials from an authorized vender. All rejections of curio have been because of items included that are not curio items or supplied by an authorized vender ( photos, magazines, personal property, photo copies, property receipts, refuse), state issued resources ( issued facial coverings, state clothing), letters (circumventing the mailroom scrutiny of letters) items made by someone other than the sender. It was discovered that one person attempted to send out a state issued t-shirt through curio to his girlfriend. It was brought to our attention that in some areas the incarcerated individuals are filling out the curio logs and staff are not inspecting the contents of what is being shipped out. The mailroom has been looking at curio items that appear to be questionable and are finding a lot of non-curio items being sent out through this process.
- Sgt. Dugger processes outgoing rejections and has not seen a rejection for a card. Normally, it is what is included with the card that gets the mailing rejected. Curio mail is for curio items to be sent out. This includes in cell hobby crafts that were made with materials authorized by policy and purchased through an authorized vendor.
- If we allow items that should not be sent, where do we draw the line? The rules are there for a reason, policies are in place for a reason.

16. Guys in quarantined units who have loved ones overseas are having a hard time getting unit staff to keep promises to let them use phones at a time of day that works for international time zone differences, forcing them to choose between calling their loved ones in what is the middle of the night overseas or just have no phone call at all. Anything that can be done about this?

- Several Unit Managers were polled and none of them who were asked have heard this from anyone. We will continue to work with the guys in the units to accommodate hardships when we can.

17. We are hearing that scheduled blanket exchanges are not happening on time in Victor, and that mattresses are being stored instead of distributed in the way the OCO evidently recommended? Is this only true in some living units, and can it be resolved in units where it is true?

- Victor Unit CUS Matson was contacted and stated: Blanket exchange is happening on schedule. We were short during quarantine. I don't understand the mattress question,

everybody has one and our process hasn't changed. They submit kites for exchanges when needed.

18. If the large quantity of prisoners on isolation in the gym could go outside several times a day for two weeks, why can't the post positive prisoners on William (and other quarantined units) go outside?
  - o The guys who are in the gym are post positives who have ended their isolation time in their previous isolation unit (recovered). They are waiting to return to their living unit when their dates line up with their previous unit or the unit is removed from isolation status. That isn't the case for everyone in William Unit, there are positives, post positives, and quarantine guys in William Unit (changing daily). The Quarantine units are different. Quarantine is actually more restrictive than Isolation. Quarantine is for those guys who are not symptomatic and have never tested positive. We are trying to make one side of the unit post positive and the other quarantine so that we can get them out to the yard like the guys in the gym. Note: there are only 11 guys left in the gym and that number is reducing daily as well.
19. If a dozen inmates can come out (for phones, showers, other common area tasks) at one time in Fox Isolation--a close custody unit--why can't post positive prisoners who are still being subjected to quarantine restrictions in William do the same?
  - o Similar answer as above. There are still quarantines, positives, and post positive guys in William Unit which means that they cannot come out and mix like those guys in Fox Unit who are all post positive and have recovered. As soon as we can transition one half of William Unit to post positive, they will be moved to a more normal movement schedule.